

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 00826 01 OF 02 122344Z
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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9753
INFO AMEMBASSY MASERU
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 0826

STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AMGT, PFOR, BC
SUBJECT: ANNUAL POLICY AND RESOURCE ASSESSMENTS

REF: A. CERP 0001, B. STATE 38356

PART I - POLICY ASSESSMENTS

A. U.S. INTERESTS: I BELIEVE THAT LONG"TERM U.S. INTERESTS IN
LESOTHO STEM FROM LESOTHO'S GEOGRAPHIC POSITION AS AN INDE-
PENDENT POLITICAL ENTITY LOCATED IN THE HEART OF THE BODY
POLITIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, UPON WHICH IT IS COMPLETELY DEPENDENT
ECONOMICALLY. IT IS LESOTHO'S GEO-POLITICAL POSITION THAT MAKES
IT OF LONG RANGE INTEREST TO THE UNITED STATES FOR FOUR
PRINCIPAL REASONS.

FIRST, LESOTHO IS A NON-RACIAL SOCIETY
AND, AS SUCH, THE ANTITHESIS OF APARTHEID. THE U.S. LONG-TERM
INTEREST IS TO STRENGTHEN LESOTHO'S EXAMPLE AS AN ALTERNATIVE
TO APARTHEID AND WHITE MINORITY GOVERNMENT ON THE ONE HAND
AND RADICAL BLACK POWER ON THE OTHER. A RACE WAR IN SOUTH
AFRICA LED BY THE EMERGING BLACK POWER FORCES WOULD BE THE
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PAGE 02 GABORO 00826 01 OF 02 122344Z

WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOME FOR U.S. POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND
SECURITY INTERESTS IN THIS REGION AND WOULD SURELY LEAD
TO THE LOSS OF U.S. ASSETS.

SECOND, LESOTHO IS RULED BY A BLACK MAJORITY. OUR LONG-
TERM INTERESTS ARE SERVED BY HAVING A SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLE OF
A BLACK-RULED COUNTRY -- ESPECIALLY IN THE HEART OF SOUTH

AFRICA. OUR AIM SHOULD BE TO TRY TO CONVINCE OTHERS THAT THIS IS A VIABLE LONG-TERM SOLUTION FOR SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF. LEAOTHO'S REGIME, WITH ITS BLEMISHES ON ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD FROM EVENT IN 1970 AND 1974, DOES NOT HAVE AN EXEMPLARY IMAGE AND STANDING IN THIS FIELD. IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO MAKE DISCREET EFFORT TO IMPROVE LESOTHO'S RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

THIRD, LESOTHO IS A STABLE COUNTRY ALTHOUGH ITS STABILITY WAS ACHIEVED AT THE PRICE OF SOME FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS NOW BEING RESTORED. ITS STABILITY, HOWEVER, REMAINS OF LONG-TERM INTEREST TO THE U.S. IN AN AREA THAT IS BECOMING ENDEMICALLY UNSTABLE.

FOURTH, THE GOL IS RECEPTIVE TO U.S. POLICY CONCERNS AND IS INTERESTED IN AMERICAN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PRINCIPLES. IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO EXPLOIT THIS RECEPTIVITY THROUGH PERSONAL CONTACTS AND THE MEDIA TO FURTHER ENCOURAGE DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES AND ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS.

THE ABOVE U.S. INTERESTS ARE ENDANGERED BY THE GROWTH OF INSTABILITY AND RADICALIZATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AS RIGHTLY POINTED OUT IN THE S/P BROAD TRENDS PAPER.

B. OVERVIEW: IN MY VIEW, THE EFFECT OF WHITE INTRANSIGENCE AND THE INCREASE IN BLACK RADICALIZATION, WHICH HAS LED TO VIOLENCE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, THREATENS TO BE INCREASINGLY FELT IN LESOTHO. U.S. POLICY IS DIRECTED AT ACHIEVING PEACE-CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 GABORO 00826 01 OF 02 122344Z

FUL SOLUTIONS BY NEGOTIATION. THE APPARENT FAILURE OF THIS POLICY TO DATE (E.G., ZIMBABWE AND NAMIBIA) UNDERMINES RELIANCE ON NEGOTIATIONS. UNLESS EARLY SUCCESS IS ACHIEVED, U.S. POLICY COULD BECOME OBSOLETE BY FY79.

LESOTHO WILL ALWAYS BE DEEPLY AFFECTED BY EVENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE GRADUAL EMERGENCE OF RADICAL BLACK ORGANIZATIONS, THEIR MILITANT ORIENTATION AND RACIST FOUNDATION, COUPLED WITH WHITE INTRANSIGENCE, MAY SERIOUSLY DIMINISH BY FY 79 THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNITED STATES ON EVENTS. THIS WOULD LEAVE LESOTHO AND U.S. LEVERAGE ON THE GOB AMONG THE FEW POTENTIAL FOUNDATIONS FOR WESTERN INFLUENCE IN THE REGION. IN BRIEF, U.S. POLICY INTERESTS ARE, AND SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE, DIRECTED AT THE SURVIVAL OF LESOTHO. THE EMPHASIS MUST BE ON ECONOMIC SUPPORT. HOWEVER, DEVELOPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH ECONOMIC RATIONALE CANNOT REALISTICALLY BE ACHIEVED BECAUSE OF LESOTHO'S LACK OF ECONOMIC PROSPECTS, RESOURCES AND MANPOWER.

C. OBJECTIVES, COURSES OF ACTION AND ISSUES: TO ENHANCE LESOTHO'S SURVIVAL SHOULD BE OUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IN FY 79. U.S. POLICY SHOULD BE PURSUED ALONG PRESENT LINES, I.E., (1) WE SHOULD ASSIST IN PROVIDING RESOURCES NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN LESOTHO'S INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY; (2) TAKING ADVANTAGE OF CURRENT GOL RECEPTIVITY, WE MUST ALSO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY CONCERNS, EMPHASIZING OUR OPEN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY WHILE ENCOURAGING MOVEMENT TOWARD RESTORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN LESOTHO.

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PAGE 01 GABORO 00826 02 OF 02 101819Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GABORONE 0826

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WE ENVISAGE THAT FY 79 AID AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

FOOD AID - SIX MILLION DOLLARS; ON-GOING PROJECTS PLUS NEW RURAL HEALTH AND AGRICULTURE PROJECTS - FOUR MILLION DOLLARS; US INFRASTRUCTURE ASSISTANCE (EXPECTED TO BE THE QACHA'S NEK-QUTHING ROAD PROJECT) - FIVE MILLION DOLLARS (I.E., 25 PERCENT OF A TOTAL ESTIMATED AT TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS FOR THIS FOUR YEAR PROJECT). THE TOTAL ESTIMATED AID FOR LESOTHO IN FY 79, THEREFORE, IS EXPECTED TO BE ROUGHLY FIFTEEN MILLION DOLLARS. A CORRESPONDING INCREASE IN AID OFFICERS RESIDENT IN LESOTHO WILL BE REQUIRED. THIS WE ESTIMATE WILL, BY FY 78, NUMBER FOUR AID OFFICERS, I.E., THE TWO PRESENTLY AUTHORIZED, PLUS A ROADS ENGINEER AND A HEALTH OFFICER. IN ADDITION, A SECOND FSL SECRETARY WILL BE REQUIRED. THE TOTAL ADDED AID COMPLEMENT: 3 (2 US AND 1 FSL). FINALLY, THE COMPLEMENT OF CORE STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICERS MUST BE INCREASED FROM

2 TO 3. A THIRD FSO (PREFERABLY AN ECONOMIC/POLITICAL OFFICER AT THE 05 OR 04 LEVEL) IS ESSENTIAL TO ENABLE THE EMBASSY TO MAINTAIN POLICY DIRECTION AND SUPERVISION AND ASSURE COORDINATION, E.G., OF ENLARGED U.S. AID PROGRAMS. THE DUTIES
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PAGE 02 GABORO 00826 02 OF 02 101819Z

OF SUCH AN OFFICER WOULD BE TO ASSURE CONSISTENCY BETWEEN LESOTHO'S ECONOMIC POLICIES AND U.S. EFFORTS AND, THROUGH A CONTINUOUS DIALOGUE WITH GOL OFFICIALS, RESPONSIVENESS TO LESOTHO'S PRIORITIES.

CURRENT POLICY PROBLEMS: AT THE MOMENT THERE IS AN ABSENCE OF CLEAR AID POLICY ON INFRASTRUCTURE REQUESTS. AS A LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRY, IT IS CLEAR THAT FUNDAMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE SUCH AS ROADS, IS THE NECESSARY PRELUDE TO DEVELOPMENT. ATTEMPTS, IN THIS SITUATION, TO APPLY NORMAL ECONOMIC CRITERIA FOR JUDGING WHETHER SUCH PROJECTS SHOULD BE APPROVED, ARE UNRECONCEILABLE WITH REALITY. GIVEN THE ECONOMIC UNAVIABILITY OF LESOTHO, AID MUST RECONCILE ITSELF TO THE NECESSITY OF ASSISTING LESOTHO ON PRIMARILY POLITICAL GROUNDS WITH THE GOAL OF SURVIVAL, RATHER THAN AIMING AT TRADITIONAL FORMS OF CONVENTIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

NOTE: ABOVE ASSESSMENT COORDINATED WITH EMBASSY MASERU.
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